

On Racism, Ego, and Awareness | Eckhart Tolle

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[Speaker 1] (0:32 - 58:04)

A good starting point is perhaps the famous statement by Martin Luther King, who said that he was looking forward to the day when people would be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character. And we take that as a starting point. We need to ask ourselves, what is the content of a person's character?

What does that mean? He's pointing to that in each human being that is actually invisible to the senses. The most important part of every human being is invisible to the senses.

That begins with simple things like the thoughts that go through your mind, the emotions that you feel. Those things are already the invisible part of who you are. You might be able to see certain ways in which the invisible manifests externally.

It can manifest through words, through facial expressions, it manifests through actions. But a very important realization is that what Martin Luther King calls the character is the invisible dimension of who the human being is. And perhaps the most important realization for any human being, which is a spiritual realization, is the realization that they are essentially invisible.

What you see on the surface is a relatively superficial phenomenon. You see the physical body. So if you are able to sense, this is perhaps a good starting point, sense within yourself that invisible being that you are, which ultimately is a consciousness and the various ways in which the consciousness takes on form as thoughts and emotion.

But essentially you are the consciousness and the consciousness is invisible. You can open up the brain and examine every cell of the human brain and you will still not find, open up my brain, you won't find me. You will not find that who that human being is.

You will not find the character of that human being. So he refers to the inner being. You can only get a glimpse of that inner being that you are beyond even the conditioned entity that is, yes, also the conditioned entity, which is the ego is invisible, but beyond the conditioned entity, there is the unconditioned being or consciousness that you are.

And the starting point as a very foundation for what I'm going to talk about is it might even be a glimpse to sense within yourself that invisible presence, even beyond thoughts and emotions or the thoughts and emotions are a manifestation of that. Also they are formations of the consciousness takes on form as an emotion or as a thought, but before it takes on form, it is the unconditioned consciousness. You are essentially that.

So let's, if you can even just get a glimpse of what it is that I'm talking about and sense

this essential, this essence within yourself, this presence, this aware presence, then you step beyond ego within yourself. And it's only then that you can look at another human being and look beyond the external appearance of that human being and sense also their innermost essence. Now, most humans are not able yet to do that.

Anybody who has not yet awakened spiritually or even had a glimpse of spiritual awakening, that human being will have certain mind forms, certain thoughts in their mind with which they judge other human beings. They are not able to truly relate to other human beings because they are, one could almost say possessed by their conditioned mind, by the thoughts that go through their mind. So you cannot meet another human being, you're meeting the judgments that your mind has formed about the other human being.

So there is a complete sense of separation and that is how the ego works. The ego is a mind made sense of self. And this mind made sense of self that consists of identifications with externals, with your body, with possessions, with abilities, with knowledge, with things that have happened to you, things that you have achieved, failures also, all these things become part of the human ego.

And you are not able to sense anything deeper within yourself than the ego of who you are, which is the conditioned entity, the conditioned self. Then every human you meet is immediately labeled in some way. You attach certain labels to human beings and you need to realize that the ego in humans, in order to assert its sense of identity, is always looking for some kind of superiority.

So the ego is comparative. When you meet another human being, the egoic sense of self will feel it's seeking superiority and it fears inferiority. So when you meet another, there's an unconscious attempt by the ego to feel superior to another human being, but the other human being, you're not actually meeting the other human being, you're meeting a mental veil.

Now, in the case of race, your mind may have been conditioned by the surrounding culture to have certain thoughts about another race, especially in the case where the other race is a minority. So if there's a majority, that is what in a Western world, it's the white race in the majority, then the most obvious thing for the egoic sense of self is to judge another human who is different, whose external appearance is different, whose skin color is different, to seek that out in an attempt to assert their superiority. And it's an egoic fallacy, but it's a very common thing to happen that you would lose the ability to actually connect with, to actually see truly that human being, because all you see is the judgments and the labels that your mind has formed, partly due to the conditioning of the culture and ultimately the conditioning of the egoic mind.

So when Martin Luther King talks about a character that's already, you're not able to meet this human being, because this human being for you, as an ego, is completely

obscured by the mind form that is the veil, the mental conditioning. You are judging this human being as the ego is judging this human being as inferior in an attempt to assert its superiority. And one of the most obvious things when there is minorities in a culture is to latch onto that for the ego, which might not have much else to identify with.

Perhaps you haven't achieved anything. You don't possess much that is more than others. You might be actually of very low intelligence in conventional terms, but then you can seek out the one thing that would make the ego feel superior.

And then you go on, you see there's another race and I'm superior to that race. It's satisfying to the ego. And there are people in whom a substantial part of their sense of identity is built around their race and the superiority of their race.

And that is the definition of racist, is someone whose sense of identity is predominantly based on race as opposed to another. And it's perceived as superior in the search, the egoic search to assert its superiority in order to feel a stronger sense of self. So it's a complete inability.

You meet a human of another race, but you're not really meeting that other human. All you're meeting is your own mental conditioning as a veil. And there's complete sense of separation.

And this is how the ego operates. The ego actually likes to emphasize that sense of separation. It likes to emphasize the otherness of other humans.

And the other is usually, but when the ego emphasizes the otherness of others, the other must be inferior so that it works, so that the ego can feel strengthened in its sense of identity. It's of course a fictitious sense of identity. So when Martin Luther King talks about character, of course, first he's talking about the unseen part that when you react to the color of a person's skin through the veil of your conditioning, you cannot see the invisible human being that is behind the external appearance.

You're completely disconnected from the human being. And character, of course, in the first instance means who that person is on a psychological level. The person might be a wonderful, enlightened human being, or a human being that has certain forms of conditioning, which may be good or bad.

Character is all the various things in which the human being becomes conditioned. And you can't even see that because you've already formulated a mental image, a conceptual sense of self for the other. And character, of course, is deeper than that.

I would, beyond character, I would define character as the way in which a human being has been conditioned to function in this world, the mental, emotional conditioning. Beyond character, in every human being, there's a deeper essence. And that deeper essence, of course, is totally invisible to you.

You cannot sense the humanity of the other beyond their conditioning, because you have already dehumanized the other by imposing a conceptual identity on the other. And enormous amount of suffering is inflicted by humans on others, because they have dehumanized the other, they have completely conceptualized the other. And then you attach labels to the other person.

Once you've done that, if you're very unconscious, you can even inflict violence, because you've already dehumanized the other. So, it's an inability to go beyond the way in which your mind has been conditioned to even have a glimpse of the other, of the human being that you're meeting. It's a veil you move.

And now, imagine that, well, you don't need to imagine, it's the case if a majority of humans in a particular culture, if a significant percentage of humans are trapped in that egoic dysfunction, then this will become translated into externals, it will become translated into institutions, all the structures that humans create, economic structures, social structures, political structures, those will become contaminated by the basic egoic dysfunction in humans.

And this to some extent has happened in the Western world and in the United States. It's very important to see that the root of racism is in the human mind. And the root of racism, ultimately, yes, you can differentiate between the unconsciousness that is in humans, that is the egoic sense of self, and the effects of that unconsciousness in the external world.

So, that state of unconsciousness creates certain structures in the external world. And you can, to some extent, undo the injustices and discriminatory practices and so on in the external world. We should, to some extent, attempt to undo as much as possible those structures which are the effect of an underlying dysfunction in the collective mind.

So, it's important to realize, yes, we can and should do as much as possible to undo the effects of that unconsciousness in the world. But realize that the ultimate liberation from racism is in the human mind. So, my work concerns primarily what I consider to be the foundation for everything else, which is the human consciousness.

No human individual being and no human society can ultimately act beyond their level of consciousness. You cannot expect an unconscious person, but you should be more conscious. He or she cannot.

He or she is trapped in the unconscious patterns. And so, while it is very important to be active in this world in order to undo as much as possible the effects of human unconsciousness, I still, I consider it of primary importance to realize that the ultimate, what we could call transcendence of the ego, is inseparable from the awakening of human consciousness so that people are able to go beyond the egoic sense of self so that they do not perpetuate those patterns.

Because even if you undo one of the institutions or whatever it is that the unconscious patterns have created, they will create something else. So, it is obvious that in this world, there are some glaring injustices. For example, in America, even to me as an outsider, it is obvious that the glaring injustices of the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of humans, in many cases, black men were incarcerated for non-violent offenses, often simply for the possession of dried leaves of a plant that they carried in their pockets.

It makes them feel good when they ingest it. And they've been in prison for years, their whole lives destroyed, incarcerated. I believe 45% or almost half are in prison for drug offenses and trapped in there for years, terribly misguided, deeply misguided policies.

So, that of course, anybody to become active, that is something that many, many people should be aware of and whatever steps they take, they should undo that particular effect of human unconsciousness. And then there are many others. I rarely tell people, I almost never tell people what to do, because that's not my function, because all doing arises out of a certain state of consciousness.

So, my main focus is always the state of consciousness out of which any activity or doing arises. My main focus is, I call that the causal realm, the realm of cause. Everything else is the realm of effect.

Now, we need to emphasize the realm of effect. We cannot say, I'm not going to do anything about the external things, because I'm only concerned with awakening, spiritual awakening. There's nothing we can do until humans have awakened spiritually.

That is not quite true. There are many things you can do without having fully awakened. You don't need to wait for some kind of awakening in order for the world to change.

So, for example, we have our foundation, Eckhart Tolle Foundation. I got together with the members of the board. We talked about what action can be taken now.

We can't wait until everybody's enlightened to take some action now. So, we selected some organizations that do great work with black people in the United States to help them on various levels. And so, we've donated a quarter million dollars to those foundations in order to alleviate the effects of human, as I call it, the effects of human unconsciousness.

So, action is taken. And we are here to interact with the world, to take action, to bring about a better world. But we need to be careful that the action does not become, so to speak, hijacked by the ego in ourselves.

So, as we take action to remedy certain situations, to change certain structures, that's very important. We're actually acting against unconsciousness. We're acting against the effects of human unconsciousness.

And yes, action is necessary, but we need to have some awareness while we act. We don't need to be fully enlightened. But in order not to see our actions reflect the unconsciousness that we are fighting, we need to be aware.

We need to have some degree of awareness in our actions. There's a famous saying by Nietzsche. He said, if you're fighting monsters, beware that you do not become a monster, that you do not turn into a monster.

So, whenever you fight human unconsciousness, you need to stay aware. You need to have some awareness. Because then, without the awareness, if you address the unconsciousness in other human beings, it's very easy for this to draw you into unconsciousness yourself.

I've been saying for years, not with reference to this particular topic, racism, but more generally, I've been saying for years, you cannot fight the ego. You cannot fight the ego in yourself, and you cannot fight the ego in others. As I said, you can, to some extent, alleviate the negative effects of what the ego has created, but you cannot fight the ego itself, neither in yourself nor in others.

If you fight the ego in yourself, you create an enormous amount of inattention, and you create a split within yourself. You don't have an inner enemy that you're fighting against that would keep you trapped in a terrible state of dysfunction. So, anybody who takes action in order to change things in the externals, needs to have some awareness, so that they do not, you can take effective action without increasing the divisiveness and antagonism in this world.

So, that is very important. You always need to see what is your contribution, even on a simple level of interacting many people on social media, what is your contribution to the discourse that people are engaged in? Are you attacking other human beings and call them evil?

Or are you actually addressing something and pointing certain things out, disseminate information, so that you can help people to become more aware and to awaken? So, in any action that you take, stay aware, so that your action does not become contaminated with ego. Because if otherwise, that which you are fighting, you will amplify.

Many things when we fight things, the fight against drugs, we haven't addressed the root cause of taking drugs. We've said we need to fight, we're talking about the war against drugs, the fight against drugs. Now, where has that led us, the fight?

Has it been successful? Not at all. If anything, it's made things worse.

So, it requires a certain amount of wisdom to be an effective agent for change in this world. And that wisdom can only arise in you, if you have a little bit of access within yourself to the unconditioned being, the unconditioned consciousness. These are very,

very huge challenge for humans to stay conscious at this time.

That is your challenge to take action, but stay conscious while you take action. It's vitally important. Then the action actually much more empowered.

So, it's very easy when you fight unconsciousness, as I said, unconsciousness in other humans to be drawn into unconsciousness yourself. Very subtle thing. Nietzsche added when he said, be careful when you fight monsters, monsters means, as I interpret it, egoic dysfunction, human unconsciousness, which creates all kinds of dreadful evils in this world.

If you fight that and you're not careful, he said, be careful, it doesn't mean necessarily, if you're not aware, that's my addition, you yourself become unconscious. And he added, if you gaze for long enough into the abyss, you will find that the abyss gazes back into you. So, this is the abyss of human unconsciousness.

It's for example, to take an example of policing in the United States, it's a big subject, it has in time. And obviously, changes are necessary in the way policing is done. There's a lot of brutality, especially directed towards black people.

Not every policeman, of course, but some, and those are the ones that stand out. And the entire system needs to be changed, needs to be looked at. It's understandable to feel anger when you look at what's been happening there.

It's totally understandable to feel that. And there's nothing wrong with that, it is a normal human reaction. But when there's lack of awareness, the danger is that the anger takes possession of you, then you lose consciousness.

When anger takes complete possession of you, it leads you to do things that are not ultimately not helpful. It's completely understandable to feel the anger. But there's a huge difference between feeling the anger and being aware of it and accept it, that is a normal human reaction.

Or not to be aware of the anger so that the force of the anger takes complete possession of you, that means awareness disappears, and you then become the anger. That means the anger has become incorporated into your egoic sense of self. And so, and then the ego, once this has happened, so ego is always when you identify with something, complete identification with something becomes part of your ego, egoic sense of self, identify, you derive your identity from.

So, in the absence of awareness, it's very easy for this to happen that the anger which is a natural thing that many humans feel when they contemplate what's happening. But in the absence of awareness, the anger can easily possess you, take you over and completely control your thinking. In other words, as I said, it becomes incorporated into your ego, it becomes part of your ego, and the actions that you then take are no longer

ultimately not helpful.

In Eastern terms, you create more karma for yourself and others. Karma is action and reaction, action and reaction. So, anger, the energy of anger can actually be transmuted and transformed when awareness is there.

The energy of anger can actually, instead of taking possession of you and becoming you, the energy of anger can be transmuted and it can become conscious action that you take. It's a transmutation of anger into conscious action. The energy of it becomes transmuted when awareness is there.

The anger is accepted, it's allowed to be there, but it does not take possession of you. You remain aware that there is anger. Then there's a possibility for the anger to be transformed into action.

But then it will be action that does not amplify the human unconsciousness in this world. Very different kind of action. So, if you take action that amplifies human unconsciousness, there's just no end.

Then the abyss is gazing back into you and draws you in. So, this, I hope, can be helpful. It requires a certain vigilance in you.

There's no need to say, I shouldn't be angry. Of course, you should be angry. Be angry, but don't be possessed by the anger.

Know that the anger is arising. Know when in the face of injustice, you feel it and that's fine. You allow it to be there and you can feel the energy of it, but awareness remains.

And then it can actually empower action. The energy becomes transformed. That can be, I highly recommend that, so that I cannot emphasize enough to be careful so that you are not taken over by something like that.

Because if you are, you strengthen not only that which you are fighting against, you amplify the unconsciousness out there, you also strengthen your own unconsciousness. You're really trapped. So, it's a very, very subtle difference.

The key remains is awareness, awareness, awareness, presence. What's going on inside me right now? What's to be aware of that?

And the picture is not entirely negative when I look at the United States. There's a lot still that needs to happen, but quite a lot. I'm an external observer, but it does seem to me I have spent time in the United States.

Since Martin Luther King, since the 60s, we have already come a long way, not to even mention the time period before that, needs to acknowledge there is also, there is a lot of goodwill in the country. There's a lot of goodwill and a willingness to change that is

certainly there. So, that is the positive aspect.

The awareness of race that we have now would have been unthinkable in the 50s, just completely impossible. So, there is a gradual growth of awareness and a gradual transformation happening, but it needs to continue. It seems to be continuing.

The one obstacle I need to mention again, be careful that you're not being taken over by certain forms of reactivity like anger and lose yourself in that. That's the, then what is now a great possibility for increasing awareness that we have now. We can go either way now.

The awareness that had arisen is great. There's possibility of further awakening, gradually also collective awakening of consciousness. But if we don't, if we are not careful, it could lead to a regressive movement.

What was so promising at first to see that happening can lead to a regressive movement if we are not careful. But even if it were the case, ultimately every regression, when it results in a further step forward, eventually human consciousness evolves, not in a straight upward line, but in cycles, regressive cycles and step forward, step back, forward, back. It's a great, huge subject, but ultimately comes down to a very simple foundation.

It is stay conscious. And so that you are a force for good in this world and continue to realize that your state of consciousness is the primordial reality. Everything comes out of that.

There was a 19th or 18th century French philosopher who said, every nation has the government it deserves. Interesting saying. So what that means, the way I see it, is whatever nation has the government, it's not only the government, all the institutions and so on that are created by this particular nation, it has the government it deserves, which means there's a collective consciousness produces the external structures.

So if the collective consciousness is deeply trapped in egoic, collective ego, it creates structures that reflect the ego, the collective ego. And if there's some awakening in the collective, then the tractors will become transformed. Either they dissolve because they people realize they don't function anymore, or they, whatever happens to them, people take action in order to say, we don't want that anymore.

But there's a deep truth in saying that every nation has a government you have to think, oh, what do we have? And it's not just the government, it's other institutions too. So this again, what I said at the beginning, no human being can manifest beyond their level of consciousness, whatever action they manifest is a reflection of their level of consciousness that applies to the collective also.

So there is a change in the collective here. So let's, I feel there's a good chance that it

will lead to a change in the externals, because more and more humans are awakening. I sometimes get the wrong impression, because most people that I'm in contact with are awakening.

So sometimes when I turn on the, well, not look at the news, and I say, oh, no, this is so many are not awakening yet. I'm sometimes shocked. All the people I'm in contact with all seem to be awakening.

Slightly distorted view, but I do know that more and more people are in the process of awakening. Now, the important thing is it's not to confuse the dysfunction that many humans still manifest, egoic dysfunction, to recognize it as egoic dysfunction, but not to confuse that with who these human beings ultimately are. Because if you confuse that, that which the dysfunction, which is just, these humans are manifestation of a particular stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet.

And they are not yet at a very advanced stage in the evolution of consciousness on the planet. So what they manifest is the egoic part, the egoic phase of the evolution of consciousness on the planet. These are patterns that operate in these humans.

The danger is, and the fallacy is to take that to be the ultimate identity of these humans and not recognize that these humans are in the grip of unconsciousness or of egoic dysfunction. That's important because, and that's all expressed, for example, in Jesus on the cross, the final words, forgive them for they know not what they do. If they had, if he had spoken in the present age, he probably would have said, forgive them for they are completely unconscious.

Now forgive them means, the way I interpret it, do not confuse their unconsciousness with who they actually are in the essence of their being. Because if you confuse that, you create enemies. And this means the moment you do that, you get trapped in egoic unconsciousness yourself.

So the forgiveness is to look beyond, to recognize it for what it is. It's like, one could almost say they are ill. It's a mental illness.

There's a huge amount of mental illness still in human beings, in the collective. And yes, okay, if a mentally ill person comes running towards you to kill you, you might have to do something. Obviously you would take action in those extreme cases, yes.

But the important thing is not to confuse the unconscious patterns that operate in those humans, not to construct an identity for them out of that. That is also, by the way, you can also do it for yourself because sometimes people come and say, I've often heard people say, I've done something very bad in the past. When I was young, I did this or that.

And I feel I just have this terrible burden of guilt in myself and I can't get rid of it. And

again, my answer is, at that time, these patterns operated in you. You were less, you were not conscious at that time.

Now you can see that what you did was bad. But if you had seen it then, you wouldn't have done it, but you were unconscious then. So sometimes you have to forgive yourself when you did something.

Sometimes it's parents, they say how I brought up my children was, I can see now why I was so unconscious when I had my children, what have I done? But again, not to make that into your identity and say that I am this bad person. No, there was unconsciousness in me that operated because I cannot, I'm never separate from the totality of humanity.

And humanity is an evolving organism. Humanity is slowly going through an awakening process. It takes time.

It's accelerating now because in the past it took just small transformations could take a thousand years. But now there is an acceleration of awakening, but it's still, we're at a problematic stage. The awakening process is happening.

So just remember not to transform other people's unconsciousness into an identity. And that really is a deeper meaning of forgiveness because then you recognize that's not ultimately who they are. There have been people in prison, some people did the most dreadful, committed the most dreadful crimes.

And I've seen cases of people in prison who completely went through a complete spiritual awakening, having had this past of very, very dreadful crimes. And there was a complete awakening suddenly, where they, their sense of identity completely shifted and came from a much deeper place. And they recognized their past self was like somebody else.

And they awakened somebody else that wasn't, that was me. Can't even, it wasn't, it was certain patterns operating using me. One could, you could look at the ego almost as a, as an entity, yes, an entity that inhabits you.

And it doesn't want to go away. It wants to strengthen itself. It can use anything to strengthen you.

And racism is a great, oh yeah, I'll be a racist. That's to feel stronger in my fictitious sense of self. So again, important thing, transcendence refers to the egoic unconsciousness and the awakening.

It does not mean that you cannot take action, but be careful so that you stay conscious while you act, which means not be taken over by some dark, reactive mode that then operates through you. And then you, that you notice, you can notice this when you see a particular thing, the enemies, you need to attack these enemies, the enemies. Jesus

said, love your enemies.

That might be going a bit too far for many people, but there's a, there's a deeper meaning behind that. If you see that in isolation, it's hard to say, well, Christians have tried to do that, but not too successfully over 2000 years, but some perhaps managed, but ultimately cause loving your enemies means have no enemies, because if you love your enemy, who is your enemy? But that was, that cannot, that statement, love your enemies can cannot be looked at in isolation.

It was related to discovering the deeper dimension of who you are, which is the kingdom of heaven within you. And when you do that, then you can see every, every human being in their essential, not see, but sense every human being in their essential identity. And then you, you don't have enemies anymore, but you can still see, yes, he or she, or they are in the grip of egoic unconsciousness.

They are crazy, ultimately. For a long time, I've been saying, I often say normal means crazy. If, and if you look at human history, this, you can verify that just read the history of the 20th century and what humans have done to other humans, the millions upon millions killed, not only in warfare, but also in, in killed by their own governments, Holocaust, mass exterminations, Russia, China, Europe.

The most dreadful, this is obviously, and these are normal human perpetrated by so-called normal human beings, not, not criminals or something. Criminals have done relatively little compared to what normal humans in the grip of unconsciousness are capable of doing is nothing compared to what so-called criminals are doing. This is why I often say normal equals, equals insane, but we are awakening.

So there is light at the end of the tunnel. Of course, the light is within you. So the, in the meantime, it's the question of race or the, the problem of race is connected with our, it's an aspect of our awakening, something that we need to overcome.

And it's also something that we're at a crossroads now, as I mentioned earlier, we could go one way towards increasing awareness and increasing transcendence of ego and the undoing of the external structures that reflect racism. Or if the other way would be if the, it could increase the divisions in society and divisiveness. So in other words, unconsciousness could take over again, and that would lead to a regressive period in human evolution.

And there have been already many regressive periods. This is not impossible that this might happen, although there's a good chance it will not happen. I can't predict the future, but even if it were to happen, if we went to a regressive period, even leading to internal conflict, even civil war is not impossible.

If we are not, if we are drawn into unconsciousness, all kinds of even war between

nations is still possible. I'm a long-term optimist, as far as human evolution is concerned. I believe even if we did have to go through a regressive period, eventually that also will become part of human awakening.

And ultimately the moment will come and race will become completely unimportant. And that is, we're moving towards that. Some people may still love their race and that's fine because race is to do with your form.

I call it your form identity, your form identity, as opposed to your essence identity. You have the two dimensions. Your form identity is the physical body and your form identity is also the makeup of your mind, mental, emotional field, the conditioning of your mental, emotional field.

This is the person that you are. The person that you are is your body and the conditioned mind. That's your form identity.

And your form identity is not to be totally dismissed. You say, you don't need to say, I'm not my body. I don't want to have anything to do with my body or this all illusion.

That's not quite it. It has its place. Your form identity has its place.

So while your body, let's say, has a particular color, you might even say, I like it. I like that color. It's fine.

But you don't derive your sense of identity from it. It's just something that you honor. You can also honor your cultural traditions, whatever it may be.

If you're African-American, you might honor your ancestors, the suffering of your ancestors, the cultural traditions of your ancestors. And so the suffering of your ancestors have led you to this point of awakening. So do not, do not often say, don't waste your suffering in this life, but also don't waste the suffering of your ancestors.

So it's suffering ultimately brings about awakening of human consciousness for a long time. Suffering is your spiritual teacher for a long time. And a lot of suffering inflicted by humans on other humans, a lot of suffering.

And don't waste the suffering. Use it. Honor that.

You can honor your ancestors and still realize that's part of your form identity. Then there's a timeless being. There's a timeless self, the unconditioned consciousness that is the essence of who you are.

And that's your, ultimately you derive your sense of being, your sense of beingness, your sense of who you are from that dimension. That Buddha called it sunyata, which is translated as emptiness. It just means formless, spacious consciousness.

Emptiness is a traditional term in Buddhism, but it really means formless, spacious consciousness. In Christian terms, Jesus said the kingdom of heaven that is within you, heaven is the vast expanse of the sky. The kingdom is the dimension.

So the kingdom of heaven is a dimension of vast spaciousness. So he's pointing, he's using that analogy to point to an inner reality. Same as the Buddha.

The Buddha said spacious consciousness, which is sunyata, emptiness. Jesus said the kingdom of heaven that is within you, which what is the kingdom of heaven? It's an analogy for an inner dimension of consciousness.

Heaven is pure consciousness, spacious awareness. Like now, this moment, you don't need to think, you don't need to affirm your form identity, but you can sense that within yourself there is an essence that is, we could call presence, we could call awareness, we could call the realization of being, we could call the primordial I am, the I am. And that presence or beingness is an alive, it's alive.

It can't be defined or explained. It has no age, no gender, no color, none of that. But become aware of yourself as an underlying quiet presence.

Your historical self becomes unimportant, but something that's left there is more vital and more essential.

[Speaker 2] (58:05 - 58:18)

This underlying quiet, alert, calm presence, we could call it stillness too, inner stillness.

[Speaker 1] (58:30 - 59:51)

And that you might also notice that your thinking subsides and you don't have to affirm through thinking who you are anymore. And that spacious awareness can be there even in everyday life to little spaces between thoughts, moments of just aware presence, while you listen to somebody, looking at the sky, looking at a tree, a flower, breathing, moments of spacious awareness. And then you use your mind again, and then you're aware again.

And after a while, the awareness remains even while you're using your mind.

[Speaker 2] (1:00:06 - 1:00:35)

So liberating. Thank you so much for your presence, which is also my presence. There's only one presence.